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ABSTRACT

Data on the ideal/actual competence of reading teacher interns were collected in a survey of teaching interns, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors. The experimental group included 34 interns who had completed a one-year field based program in diverse settings prior to internship. The control group included 64 interns who had completed traditional on-campus courses with little or no field experience prior to internship. The data revealed that cooperating teachers for the experimental interns had significantly more negative perceptions of intern competencies than did all the other respondents. The mean score of experimental interns was more positive than that of their cooperating teachers. It was proposed that experimental group interns may have developed more self-confidence in teaching, tending not to rely on their cooperating teachers for guidance. Competencies rated most important by all groups included being regularly prepared for daily teaching, matching materials and activities to instructional level and using individual, small group, and total class instructional strategies. Items rated least important by all groups were appropriate nonverbal behavior, organized introductions and conclusions of learning experiences, and balanced use over time of instructional strategies. (RI)

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Perceptions of Intern Competencies in Teaching Reading

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The primary focus of this study is upon perceptions of intern competencies in teaching reading. Two broad purposes of the study were (1) to analyze perceptions of intern behavior under real conditions, and (2) to analyze perceptions regarding ideal competencies. Questions which guided the direction for this investigation were:

1. Is there a significant difference in perceptions of intern competency in teaching reading when measured by interns, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors ratings?
2. Which competencies do interns, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors perceive as most important and least important?

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Conduct of the Study

Population for the study consisted of an experimental and a control group. The experimental group consisted of thirty-four (34) interns who had completed a one-year field based program in diverse settings prior to internship, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors. The control group consisted of sixty-four (64) interns who had completed the traditional on-campus course with little or no field experience prior to internship, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors.

Data Collection

Data were collected by a questionnaire which identified twenty-five (25) behaviors ranging from general to specific. Three items dealt with instructional planning, five with conducting a reading lesson, three with comprehension, and ten with diagnostic teaching. Sixteen of the items were keyed to the IRA guidelines (1978). The other five dealt with implementation of a lesson and were not on the IRA list. The Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) was used for the response. The interns, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors were asked to respond to items twice, once in terms of their perceptions under real conditions and once in terms of perceptions regarding ideal competencies.

Findings

Response to the items were of two types: (1) perceptions under real conditions, and (2) perceptions under ideal competencies.

Question 1. Is there a significant difference in perceptions of intern competencies in teaching reading when measured by cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and intern ratings?

An ANOVA technique was used to analyze the groups' ratings for experimental and control conditions. A significant F ratio was produced which yielded an overall significance ($p < .05$). The mean scores were then compared using Scheffe's S method. Table 1 reports the results of the a posteriori comparisons.

Table 1
Comparisons of
Mean Scores of Cooperating Teachers, University Supervisors, and Intern Perceptions of Intern Competency

	Control	Experimental
University Supervisors	1.756	1.733*
Cooperating Teachers	1.760	2.336*
Interns	1.871	1.854

*significant difference at .05 level

Analysis of the data revealed that control cooperating teachers, control interns, and university supervisors for both experimental and control groups had significantly more positive perceptions of intern competencies than did the cooperating teacher for the experimental interns.

There was no significant difference in perceptions of competency when looking at experimental cooperating teachers and the experimental interns; however, the mean score of the experimental interns was more positive than the cooperating teachers. Again there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the experimental supervisors and the experimental cooperating teachers.

In looking more closely at the items related to competencies, signi-

ficant differences ($p < .05$) were found between the experimental university supervisors and the experimental cooperating teachers on items which dealt with: use of preplanned questions, preplanned questions as part of the lesson plan, and being regularly prepared for daily teaching.

Question 2. Which competencies do interns, cooperating teachers, and university superivsors perceive as most important and least important? The respondents' ratings of the real teaching behaviors in reading were directed toward specific preservice teachers. The second questions which asked for ratings under ideal conditions focused on generic teaching behaviors in reading rather than teacher-specific behavior. These behaviors are listed in summary form as an attachment to this paper.

Table 2 summarizes the ten most important behaviors for all three responding groups.

Table 2
Most Important Behaviors

Rank	Supervisors	Teachers	Interns
1	1*	1	5
2	8	9	1
3	9	10	4
4	12	18	7
5	13	5	2
6	22	7	8
7	23	8	17
8	18	12	18
9	14	4	12
10	20	11	21

*Item numbers that correspond to attached list.

Four behaviors were rated in the top ten by all respondent groups:

1. Regularly prepared for daily teaching;
2. Use material appropriate for the instructional level of the students;
3. Use activities appropriate for the instructional level of the students; and
4. Use individual, small group, and total class instruction.

Table 3 summarizes the ten least important behaviors for all three responding groups.

Table 3
Least Important Behaviors

Rank	Supervisors	Teachers	Interns
16	2*	15	25
17	10	13	13
18	15	24	22
19	19	6	21
20	20	2	18
21	25	22	19
22	16	25	24
23	22	14	6
24	21	16	16
25	23	23	23

*Item numbers that correspond to attached list.

Again, four behaviors were rated in the least important group by all responding groups:

1. Use appropriate non-verbal behavior while teaching;

2. Provide an organized introduction for each learning experience;
3. Provide a planned conclusion for each learning experience; and
4. Use an appropriate balance of strategies over time.

Discussion

This study found the cooperating teacher perceptions consistently more negative in regard to teaching behaviors than either the interns' or the supervising teachers'. One explanation for this may be that the interns have developed more self-confidence in teaching and do not rely as heavily upon the teacher for guidance and assistance.

The respondents' ratings of the teaching behaviors produced results that indicate ideal behaviors, as viewed by all three groups, require a regularly prepared person who meets the needs of individual students. Three of the four items rated highly by the groups were classified as behaviors needed in organizing school and classroom for diagnostic teaching (Sections V-B) in the International Reading Association guidelines (May, 1978).

The cluster of least important behaviors in the teaching of reading produced two results that warrant discussion. First, behaviors related to introducing and concluding a reading lesson received low rankings. Introducing a lesson serves an important function in motivating students while a conclusion brings closure and enhances summarizing and reflection. If, in fact, being prepared to teach is important in reading, then considerations for introducing and concluding a lesson should be included in the planning process. Second, nonverbal behaviors such as facial expressions and hand gestures were included in the least important cluster by all three groups. Admittedly, they did not receive the overall low ranking given to introducing and concluding a lesson, but sufficiently low for discussion purposes.

Hand gestures and facial expressions have an influence on student behavior. These non-discursive movements are the more subtle behaviors when compared to general movements around the classroom. Teachers should view gross and fine nonverbal movements as part of a continuum that can influence student behavior. (Brophy and Good, 1974)

The listing of attitudes, concepts, and skills by the International Reading Association in their guidelines is helpful in conceptualizing the role of persons involved in the teaching of reading. The Association "recommends that every person attain the attitudes, concepts, and skills needed for all assigned roles" (p. 1). Does each role group involved in reading perceive the different attitudes, concepts, and skills equally in relation to importance? It is doubtful. Follow-up to this study will use the guidelines prepared by the IRA to validate a set of criteria that can be used for purposes such as certifying reading personnel and self-assessment of persons in reading education. A reading supervisor in a school district cannot use all the criteria when working with teachers. A university supervisor needs a valid set of attitudes, concepts, and skills that can be used in working with preservice teachers. This study has shown that role groups perceive behavior in the teaching of reading differentially. What is the relative importance of the attitudes, concepts, and skills delineated in the IRA guidelines?

References

Brophy, J.E. and Good, T.L., Teacher-student relationships: Causes and Consequences. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974.

Professional Standards and Ethics Committee. Guidelines for the professional preparations of reading teachers. Newark: International Reading Association, May, 1978.

Teacher Behaviors Related to Reading

1. Regularly prepared for daily teaching.
2. Recognize and act on situations that could create discipline problems.
3. Resolve discipline problems satisfactorily when they arise.
4. Maintain respect of students while keeping discipline in the classroom.
5. Maintain general control/management in the classroom.
6. Have preplanned questions as part of the daily lesson plan.
7. Ask a variety of questions during the process of teaching.
8. Use material appropriate for the instructional level of the students.
9. Use a variety of materials in teaching.
10. Use a variety of activities while teaching, e.g. task sheets, games.
11. Use materials that parallel interest levels of a majority of the students.
12. Use activities appropriate for the instructional level of the students.
13. Integrate the use of teacher-made and commercially made materials.
14. Use a variety of strategies, e.g. role-playing and learning centers.
15. Involve a majority of students while using a variety of strategies.
16. Use an appropriate balance of strategies over time.
17. Motivate students to elicit desired learning outcomes.
18. Use individual, small group, and total class instruction.
19. Use preplanned activities during teaching.
20. Use preplanned evaluation techniques to assess students.
21. Use preselected materials to support teaching.
22. Provide an organized introduction for each learning experience.
23. Use a planned conclusion for each learning experience.
24. Use appropriate movement within the classroom while teaching.
25. Use appropriate facial expressions, hand gestures, etc. while teaching.